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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/RSA, PM, EUR/RPG.  
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS.  
USEUCOM FOR MAJ GEN GRATION AND POLAD AMB. YATES.

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TAGS: PREL MARR KPKO AU XA  
SUBJECT: AU TELLS EUCOM J5 AFRICAN STANDBY FORCE MOVING  
AHEAD

ADDIS ABAB 00004179 001.2 OF 002

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: The AU Commission hopes a series of thematic workshops will create enough regional buy-in to enable a harmonized approach to the African Standby Force (ASF), AU Planning Element Chief of Staff BG Hassan told EUCOM J5 Maj Gen Scott Gration and Polad Amb. Yates on December 16. The AU is also undertaking a series of meetings with the regions to ensure ASF approaches follow an AU-led concept. Under ASF, each of the AU's five regions will form one brigade deployable, with AU authorization, either intra-region by the region itself, or inter-region by the AU.  
End summary.

¶2. (U) Also present were Peace Support Operation Division (PSOD) members LTC. Mbaye and Gen. Jaotody, EUCOM Military LNO to the AU and Poloff (notetaker).

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WORKING TO CREATE BUY-IN AND A HARMONIZED APPROACH  
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¶3. (SBU) BG Hassan, the Chief of Staff of an initially-planned five-person AU Planning Element (PLANELM), told EUCOM J5 Maj Gen Gration that upcoming workshops on doctrine; training and evaluation; logistics; command, control, communications and information systems (C3IS); and standard operating procedures (SOPs) are necessary to ensure member state buy-in and to coordinate ASF requirements. BG Hassan envisions workshops throughout 2006 that will culminate in a fall 2006 final coordination conference to harmonize positions, though the overall process is expected to conclude in 2010. (Note: In a separate meeting December 12, AU PSOD Director Bereng Mtimkulu told G-8 plus representatives that late November 2005 technical meetings to prepare the ASF workshops were a "good start," but that

differing levels of regional expertise may present a challenge during the workshops themselves. Workshop conclusion documents were forwarded to AF/RSA. End note.)

¶14. (SBU) BG Hassan said his team plans consultative visits to each of the five regions to ensure harmonization of approach in implementing ASF brigade formation. He noted that his team had just returned from the central region (led by regional economic community (REC) ECCAS) and reached agreement on the need for AU-dedicated brigades to form under a common concept. ECCAS also agreed to a forward-deployable PLANELM instead of providing all strategic guidance from a central headquarters. BG Hassan said that the Northern Region (NASBRIG) has experienced more challenges in getting organized due to the lack of a REC to lead the process, but has now begun to hold ASF coordination meetings under Libyan leadership. He expressed satisfaction and surprise that the Northern Region did not impede agreement on the way forward for ASF doctrine during the late-November technical meetings.

(Note: Experts agreed that SADC and Nigerian doctrine would serve as the models for ASF. End note.)

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A GLIMPSE AT ASF STRATEGY  
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¶15. (SBU) Maj Gen Gration pointed out that holding workshops before an overall AU strategy for ASF is in place may result in agreement on logistics or other requirements that do not ultimately suit the AU's vision for ASF. BG Hassan responded that the AU continues to work on the strategic vision document as an overall umbrella for ASF, and that this document will need to be approved by the Military Staff Committee (MSC) and Peace and Security Council (PSC). In the meantime, he said, ASF efforts will be guided by the ASF Roadmap and Framework Document. BG Hassan said that holding

ADDIS ABAB 00004179 002 OF 002

workshops before having a strategy is in place may not be ideal, but the AU is using the workshops to bring member states together under an AU-led process. Regions were already going their own way on ASF formation, he said, and the AU needed to take control of the process in the interest of harmonization. The AU wants to create an ASF that can be implementable and stand the test of time, BG Hassan commented.

¶16. (SBU) ASF focal point Col. Mbaye elaborated on the AU concept for ASF. He said that the AU envisions one brigade per each of the five regions. A region would be free to manage the brigade within the region itself, but not outside the region. According to Col. Mbaye, any deployment would still require an AU mandate. While noting that the AU-RECs memorandum of understanding and ASF workshops will clarify details, Col. Mbaye said that the AU assumes that each region will have its own depot and that the AU will maintain a reserve logistics depot in Addis Ababa. Field Operations Director Gen. Jaotody added that the AU shares partner concerns about the need for interoperability, and that ASF guidance will point to where interoperability should be taken into account.

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AU GRATEFUL FOR USG SUPPORT, DIALOGUE TO CONTINUE  
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¶17. (SBU) BG Hassan said that G8 and USG support for ASF is key to its success. He looked forward to the EUCOM-sponsored Africa Endeavor (AE) conference (scheduled for February) as a useful contribution to the U.S. partner lead on C3IS. BG Hassan also expressed interest in visiting NATO to learn how NATO may be able to contribute to the ASF effort. BG Hassan noted that African ownership is important, but the AU also relies on partners for expertise and funding. He urged patience as the AU works to bring its regions together under an AU umbrella for ASF.

¶8. (SBU) Maj Gen Gration noted that a dialogue with the AU as it further develops ASF strategy is essential to ensure that partners deliver the right type of support to the AU. He said that the USG works within the Africa Clearinghouse mechanism to coordinate AU assistance. EUCOM and other actors want to deliver support that matches AU intent for deployment location, duration and purpose. Maj Gen Gration stated that the USG wants to work within an AU-led process to deliver the most effective support possible given limited resources. He encouraged the AU to dialogue regularly with the Addis-based EUCOM liaison officer.

¶9. (SBU) BG Hassan agreed with the need to keep partners informed as the AU further develops its ASF strategy documents. The AU sees ASF as eventually applicable to not only African-led peacekeeping operations and enhanced African contribution to UN operations, but also to the global war on terror, BG Hassan concluded.

¶10. (SBU) Note: The AU is looking to lead partners to coordinate funding for each of the five ASF workshops and relevant pre-meetings. The AU estimates the cost for the USG-led C3IS workshop at USD 123,000. Budget and related documents were sent to AF/RSA. End note.

¶11. (U) This cable was cleared by EUCOM Polad Amb. Yates.

HUDDLESTON